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SB-837 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF PERFLUOROALKYL OR POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES IN CLASS B FIREFIGHTING FOAM

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) supports SB-837, which is intended to address concerns associated with Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances, commonly referred to as PFAS, contained in Class B Firefighting Foam.

Unfortunately, harmful PFAS chemicals are ubiquitous in our environment and efforts must be undertaken to address PFAS contamination, including:

- 1) Preventing any further releases or introduction of PFAS containing substances in our soil and water;
- 2) Identifying areas with known PFAS generators, such as landfills, airports, fire training schools and certain manufacturing facilities, and conducting testing to determine the extent of any PFAS contamination in these areas; and
- 3) Targeting sufficient state resources to remediate PFAS contamination in landfills, and other areas.

Accordingly, COST supports provisions in the bill which:

- 1) Prohibit the use of PFAS containing firefighting foam for training purposes;
- 2) Restricts the use of PFAS containing firefighting foam for any firefighting purpose except petroleum-based fires; and
- 3) Establishes a take-back program for municipal sources of PFAS.

These provisions will help prevent any further releases or introduction of PFAS in our soil and water. We urge lawmakers to ensure, however, that adequate firefighting foam alternatives are available to protect the safety of the public in the event of a fire. In addition, it is our understanding that the Federal Aviation Authority may require certain firefighting foam to be available at airports. In this case, Connecticut should ensure that any PFAS containing foam is properly stored and transported to avoid any further releases in our soil and water.

Relative to the take-back program, the language in the bill should be clarified and lawmakers must ensure that the take-back program is adequately funded so that these costs are not unfairly shifted to property taxpayers.

COST is concerned, however, that there is not a greater focus this year on addressing



concerns regarding PFAS in landfills and other areas that are known sources of PFAS. By its own admission, DEEP has stated that landfills are a major concern and “absolutely a source of PFAS in the environment”.

Last year, the Bond Commission authorized the release of \$750,000 to address concerns regarding PFAS in five closed landfills. However, there are currently more than 200 closed landfills in this state. If landfills are not tested and remediated for PFAS, leachate from landfills will continue to contaminate groundwater, including private wells, public water supplies, and rivers and streams used for fishing, boating, and swimming.

Preventing the release and introduction of PFAS and remediating areas contaminated with PFAS is much more cost effective and protective of the public health and environment than relying on treatment. Treatment is extremely costly and will have to be done repeatedly if landfills are not adequately remediated for PFAS contamination.

Recognizing this, the Final Report of the Governor’s Interagency PFAS Working Group calls for testing of soil and water, including conducting testing at landfills. Given the ongoing fiscal challenges facing municipalities and the uncertain economic impact that COVID-19 will have on residents and businesses, costs associated with testing and remediation should be borne by the state and not shifted to municipalities and property taxpayers.